



Why We All Need to Stand Up for Science

Nina C. Christie, The American Association for the Advancement of Science

You've seen the news, right? The infrastructure that supports American science is being dismantled. Beyond what we will lose, I find myself mourning who we will lose.

It is nearly impossible to measure the losses we as a society are facing from these massive cuts to scientific inquiry. For the last month, I have been thinking about who gets hurt. I think about how the anti-vaccine agenda will slow down the next steps for a new mRNA vaccine to protect against pancreatic cancer, which took the life of my best friend's father when we were 17. I think about my officemate, whose research on health disparities and substance use in the LGBTQ+ population was politically sabotaged. I am thinking about her son, who is less than a year old and can't yet be vaccinated for measles while it spreads here in New Mexico. I am thinking about the would-be-researcher who spoke at our Stand Up For Science rally in Santa Fe: She was accepted to three environmental science PhD programs (a wildly impressive feat). All three offers were rescinded because of threats to federal funding. I think about a fellow postdoc whose proposal to study the link between Alzheimer's disease and alcohol in mice was thrown away because the grant program supports diverse scholars. I think about my own work, whether I can continue to do research in harm reduction and substance use to improve public health and reduce fatal overdose, which took my brother's life a decade ago. It is increasingly unbearable to watch as my friends, fellow researchers, lose opportunities to advance scientific research.